

# Tuesday Morning

DATELINE WASHINGTON

Week of June 20, 2000

**USDA Recognizes ASFSA Food Distribution 2000 Team Members -** The Food Distribution 2000 team issued its final report earlier this year and received recognition last week for its efforts to reinvent the commodity program. The reinvention effort is being called the largest ever initiated for commodity programs and perhaps the largest ever attempted by USDA. In the report, the team recommended actions and set a timeline for completion. Actions are to occur in four areas:

- Procurement Specifications
- Commodity Processing
- Commodity Holds and Recalls
- Communication/Pilots/Other Improvements

Team members were congratulated at a ceremony for their efforts in making the commodity program more effective. Julie Paradis, Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, stood in for Under Secretary Shirley Watkins. ASFSA team members include:

- Don Trumble, Washington County Schools, Md. (retired)
- Paula Cockwell, Commerce City Schools, Colo.
- Gail Johnson, East Baton Rouge Parish Schools, La.
- Barry Sackin, formerly with Anaheim City School District, Calif. and current ASFSA Director of Government Affairs

## **USDA to Launch Nutrition Education and Promotion Campaign -**

Representatives of the American Dietetic Association (ADA), Society for Nutrition Educators (SNE), National Association of WIC Directors (NAWD), and the International Food Information Council (IFIC) joined ASFSA at a meeting with Under Secretary Shirley Watkins to discuss USDA's new nutrition education and promotion program. The campaign will launch at ANC this July when the USDA's new mascot will be introduced.

Planned as a five-year effort to promote good nutrition and activity behaviors among youths, it targets both children and caregivers (parents, teachers, and child-care providers). The theme for the new promotion is "Eat Smart. Play Hard." USDA is developing a variety of high quality materials for distribution to schools, activity centers and other places where the message can reach target audiences. Return to the ASFSA Public Site, Your Child Nutrition e-Source, this fall for details on how to obtain posters and other materials.

**CDC Identifies Youth Risk Behaviors -** The current issue of Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention includes the 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance. This annual

report examines the behaviors which cause illness and death in America's youth by surveying a statistically valid sample of 9th - 12th grade students.

Leading causes of mortality and morbidity among all age groups in the United States are related to the following six categories of health behavior:

- behaviors that contribute to unintentional and intentional injuries;
- tobacco use;
- alcohol and other drug use;
- sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and STDs, including human immune-deficiency virus (HIV) infection;
- unhealthy dietary behaviors and,
- physical inactivity.

These behaviors are frequently interrelated and often extend into adulthood.

### **ASFSA Asks Gore and Bush for Their Views on Child Nutrition Programs -**

Last month ASFSA mailed questionnaires to presidential candidates George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore.

The questionnaires asked the candidates specific questions on recent issues affecting the nation's child nutrition programs. Both candidates have notified ASFSA of their intentions to complete the questionnaire.

### **USDA Asks NSLP Supplier to Suspend Meatpacking Plant Operations -**

After failing a fourth round of microbial tests, USDA asked Supreme Beef Processors, Inc. to suspend operations at its Dallas plant. Supreme Beef, a Texas based food processor, supplies 15% of the National School Lunch Program's (NSLP) ground beef from its two Texas plants. According to Thomas Billy, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service Agency, this fourth and latest failure occurred after the company had made improvements to its sanitation procedures.

As reported in the December 21, 1999 Tuesday Morning, USDA pulled its meat inspectors from one of the plants in December after meat at the plant failed microbial tests on three separate inspections. Without USDA approval, meat and poultry cannot be sold across state lines. Removal of these inspectors ultimately forces a plant to close its doors.

Following the inspectors' pull out, Supreme Beef obtained a ten-day court injunction to stop the USDA action. This order was extended indefinitely in a subsequent order by a Texas federal judge. In response to the judge's order, USDA recently announced plans for new safety standards for ground beef purchased for the NSLP. The new standard is reported to be similar to the pathogen testing requirements many fast food restaurants impose on meatpackers.

**Bill Gates Comments in Time on Genetically Modified Foods** - In a recent issue of Time magazine, Microsoft's Bill Gates noted that although genetically modified (GM) food has strong opposition in the wealthiest countries in the world, "it is the poor and the hungry who need it most." The article, part of Time's "Visions 21" series, recognizes that GM food is and will continue to be one of the most volatile and important issues of the new century.

In an effort to emphasize the urgent nature of this issue, Gates cites alarming statistics from recent U. N. estimates that shows an expanding gap between arable land and world population. According to Gates, the U.S. has become the leader in biotechnological advances, but these advances have not been mirrored in countries that currently have or are expected to have hunger crises in the next century.

**Tuesday Morning Goes Online** - Starting August 1, 2000 Tuesday Morning will become an Internet only publication. Currently the online version of Tuesday Morning is only available to subscribers of the ASFSA Connection. Beginning August 1, all information will be integrated into the new ASFSA Public Site, Your Child Nutrition e-Source. The staff of Tuesday Morning thanks its loyal readers and looks forward to continuing to use the World Wide Web to provide you with the same excellent coverage of legislative issues.